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ABSTRACT

This document presents principles and plans for a proposed Nebraska state program to provide integrated services to students who are deaf or hard of hearing. After an introduction which illustrates the overall model, the report identifies guiding principles for all programs serving children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Next, principles of access to programs and the school district's role are listed. The following section details the state role as it pertains to: outreach services (including technical assistance, expert consultation, materials and supplies, and financial resources); residential services (including alternative family care, cottage or group care, dormitory living, transitional living apartments, and referral to other agencies); the interpreter training program; and regional/statewide programs. Principles for regional/statewide programs are further detailed in the next section. Several brief sections then list standards for program coordination and delineate a proposed transition plan to the new program with dates beginning in June 1997, and extending through 2002. Also provided is an estimated budget for the 1997-98 transition plan. Appendices offer "promising practices" guidelines and include suggestions for parent programs, new standards for education of deaf and hard of hearing students, guidelines for sign language interpreters, a summary of the State Board action directing this plan, and new schooling standards. (DB)

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ED 415 619

Statewide Educational Programs and Support Services for Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

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Report to the State Board of Education
Submitted by Dr. Douglas D. Christensen
Commissioner of Education

EC 306099

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*"Ultimately, the question [of where deaf students should be educated] is not **where** but **how well**."*
Thomas N. Kluwin

PREFACE

This plan was developed on the concept of regional programs and cooperative relationships with the school districts, regional educational service units and consortium of school districts in order to:

- Maximize resources in providing programs and services for children
- Provide a network of support and services statewide
- Reduce costs now in order to maintain future funding
- Build a base of quality programs from which a magnet program(s) can evolve
- Reinforce the belief that children who are deaf and hard of hearing benefit from education with hearing and deaf or hard of hearing peers
- Continue state leadership and support for residential programs and services for children who are deaf or hard of hearing

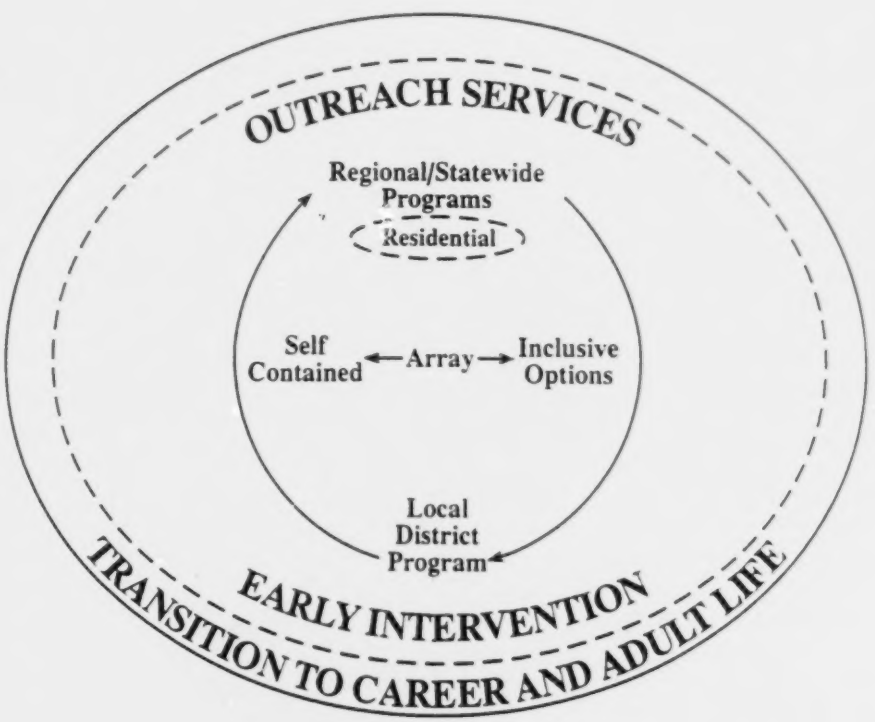
INTRODUCTION

Quality learning opportunities should exist for all children. However, some children do not have access to the opportunities that exist due to circumstances such as a disability, place or residence, or socioeconomic conditions. Local school districts and the State of Nebraska are responsible for providing the quality programs necessary to address these special learning needs.

The education of students who are deaf or hard of hearing requires specialized programs, extraordinary related services, and appropriately certified personnel with effective communication skills. Quality learning experiences for deaf or hard of hearing children should accommodate not only their disabilities, but should also recognize and build on their unique strengths and learning styles. Early identification followed by timely intervention and outreach services must form a safety net of support around all programs and services if quality and equity are to be made a reality for all.

It is intended that the proposed system operate as a fluid network allowing students to move to appropriate programs and services as needs and circumstances change. The state system should have distinct yet connected options.

The Nebraska Model



Draft #2 of this report is submitted to the State Board of Education by the Commissioner of Education after receiving public input and advice from the Special Education Advisory Council and its standing Advisory Committee for the Education of Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and a series of public engagement sessions held throughout the state regarding statewide services for educating children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Testimony received at the public input session at the May 9th State Board of Education meeting was also used in completing this report. The report outlines a more detailed plan for providing children who are deaf or hard of hearing a free appropriate public education in a more efficient and collaborative manner. Additional details will evolve as the process continues.

A special thank you to all those who have served on the various committees and task forces over the years. Also, thank you to those who have shared their recommendations, concerns and expertise by providing testimony associated with the various public engagement meetings and the public input session on May 9, 1997. As evident by the quantity and quality of input from the many stakeholders, it is apparent that Nebraska has the interest and capacity to assure that all children who are deaf or hard of hearing have access to a free appropriate public education.

As can be concluded by reviewing the *Statewide Services for Educating Children Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing: Report of Public Engagement Meetings* and the testimony received at the May 9, 1997 public input session, there are many common themes upon which stakeholders agree and there are issues upon which there is not total agreement. The following principles will guide this report in outlining educational programs and support services for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ALL PROGRAMS SERVING CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

1. Individuals closest to the child, especially the parents, in consultation with professionals and in some instances with the child, are in the best position to make educational program decisions for children.

    1.1 Parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing should be aware of all the options available to their children.

    1.2 Decision making in planning for the education of children who are deaf or hard of hearing must include professionals trained in the education of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

    1.3 Parent education and staff development are essential components for meeting the needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

2. Children who are deaf or hard of hearing:

2.1 should meet the same educational requirements as those of their hearing peers, with few exceptions;

2.2 need special accommodations, procedures and protections to benefit from an educational program;

2.3 need learning opportunities in an environment with peers who are not deaf or hard of hearing; and,

2.4 need learning opportunities in an environment with peers who are deaf or hard of hearing.

3. An array of education programs allowing movement within the options, will be available for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

3.1 Strong partnerships among parents, school districts, services providers and agencies are vital to meet the needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

3.2 Professionals providing direct services to children who are deaf or hard of hearing must be trained and skilled in this discipline.

3.3 Children should have an opportunity to learn about deafness, including sign language and have interaction with deaf or hard of hearing role models.

3.4 The state will provide resources (financial, informational, technical assistance, professional support and residential services) to assist parents, schools and communities with decision making for education of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

ACCESS TO PROGRAMS

All children who are deaf or hard of hearing in Nebraska shall have access to a free appropriate education via one of the following options:

1. Local school district program

2. Neighboring school district or cooperative through contract or option enrollment.

3. Enter regional/state wide program through state network

SCHOOL DISTRICT ROLE

1. School districts will assure that all children who are deaf or hard of hearing have available a free appropriate public education which includes special education and related services to meet their unique needs.

2 School districts will assure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children who are deaf or hard of hearing are educated with other children, both hearing and deaf or hard of hearing.

3. School districts will assure an array of placement options are available for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

4. School districts may provide education and related services by contracting with another school district, approved cooperative, or with a service provider approved by the Department of Education.

5. School districts should develop partnership agreements with other school districts, educational service units, cooperatives and the Department of Education to meet the needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

6. School districts shall meet the standards of Nebraska Department of Education (Rule 51) Regulations and Standards for Special Education Programs.

7. School districts should offer parent education programs such as comprehensive information and support related to family needs, educational options, legal rights, adjustment issues, and methods of communicating. (See Appendix I)

8. School districts should develop program improvement plans to meet the Educational Services Standards and Best Practices Guidelines (see Appendix II and Appendix V).

9. All school districts and approved cooperatives (even if they do not enter into a state approved regional/statewide program agreement) will continue to be eligible for special education reimbursement/payment if they meet the standards of Rule 51.

STATE ROLE

STATE ROLE--OUTREACH SERVICES: Outreach services may include technical assistance, expert consultation, materials and supplies, and financial resources. Outreach is viewed as an integral part of the statewide system and a means for ensuring quality educational opportunities for children who are deaf or hard of hearing in Nebraska. The state will provide support for school districts, educational service units, regional/statewide programs formed by partnership agreements, and parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Outreach services will encompass the Guiding Principles for All Programs Serving Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and will include, but not be limited to, the following services:

1. All families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing will be made aware of the availability of outreach services. The public will be informed about the needs of, and services available for, children who are deaf or hard of hearing

   Outreach will provide information and training packets, including video tapes, regarding the educational needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing and the various program options.

2. Consultation in the areas of student assessment, program development and evaluation, parent education and professional development will be made available.

   Outreach will support the provision of appropriate assessment services to children who are deaf or hard of hearing by providing an array of qualified professional assessment service providers and identifying strategies for appropriate referral. From student assessment data, information will by synthesized for functional program implementation.

   Outreach will support the provision of appropriate student services by providing an array of qualified, professional direct-service providers and consultants. Outreach will also provide assistance in the areas of long term transition planning and supplemental educational and social opportunities for families and children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

   Outreach will support the provision of appropriate family services by identifying qualified direct-service providers and consultants and providing access to qualified direct-service providers and consultants. Parent/family resource centers and information networks will be promoted and strengthened.

   Outreach will provide a network of staff training services by creating a system of locating, maintaining and training local human resources and establishing, promoting or strengthening in-service/preservice training options.

3. A data base regarding programs and children who are deaf or hard of hearing will be established and maintained.

4. A network of communication among stakeholders will be established and maintained.

5. An information and dissemination clearinghouse will be established and maintained.

6. Outreach support may include serving as the broker of services.

7. Outreach will facilitate the development of partnership agreements among parents, school districts, regional/statewide programs, service providers and agencies to assure all children who are deaf or hard of hearing have a free appropriate public education and that an array of auxiliary services are available. (See Appendix I)

8. Outreach will provide and disseminate information regarding the Interpreters' Code of Ethics (see Appendix III).

9. Outreach will offer summer parent education and staff development opportunities. (See Appendix I)

10. Outreach will provide opportunities for parents, children and professionals to learn about deafness, including sign language. These opportunities will be available on an ongoing basis and through summer intense programs. (See Appendix I)

11. Outreach will arrange for and, if necessary, provide staff to act as multidisciplinary and Individual Education Program (IEP) team members when appropriate staff are not available at the school district or regional program level.

12. Interagency collaborative agreements will be developed among school districts, approved cooperatives, ESUs, and appropriate agencies, qualified professionals and families.

STATE ROLE--RESIDENTIAL SERVICES: The Department of Education will continue to be responsible for the provision of ***residential services*** when it has been determined through the planning process that residential services are necessary for the child to benefit from the educational program. Residential options will be coordinated with the child's family and approved residential service providers. Residential options will be developed prior to the 1998-99 school year.

All residential options will have as their core components:

1. A setting that assures the safety of each child
2. Maximum family involvement
3. A program that supports and enhances the educational program and the IEP
4. Active community involvement
5. Staff with competence in sign language and child care skills

Residential options to be considered:

- Alternative Family Care
- Cottage or group care
- Dormitory
- Transitional living apartments
- Referral to other agencies

Alternative Family Care provides care by a family who lives within commuting distance of the program being accessed by the student. Using a modified family care model, the student will live with a family selected by the parent with the assistance of the alternate family program or the local school district. The family will be one in which at least one parent is a competent signer. Students in alternative families will generally be home at least each weekend. Assistance is available to school districts to recruit, train and maintain families as the need is identified.

Cottage or group care provides an option when there is a small group of children (3 to 8). Students will benefit from the peer interaction, social skills development or have other special needs. A Cottage Program can be staffed by a husband and wife team or by child care professionals. The staff can live in the cottage with the students and there will not be a requirement for 24 hour awake staff unless the needs of the students dictate it. Programming will be individualized to met the needs of the students. Sign language competence, an understanding of deafness, knowledge of children development and child care skills will be required of all staff.

Dormitory living will include self care skills, social skills development, pre-independent living skills, sign language skills, leisure time skills, work habits, community interaction and leadership training. This programming may be provided by a combination of community experts and the residential staff. Information can be taught through formalized classes, activities, social interaction and individual counseling with students. Twenty-four hour awake staff will be provided with the staffing ratio of one adult to five children. Staff will be required to have sign language competence, an understanding of deafness, knowledge of child development, child care skills, and skills and experience in working with students with multiple disabilities. Auxiliary services such as health care, recreation and a family center can be provided to supplement the dormitory program.

Transitional living apartments provide an opportunity for high school students who have demonstrated the knowledge and responsibility to practice the skills learned as part of their IEP or transition plan. The program will provide a level of increased decision making for the student. Programming will focus on time management, decision making, setting priorities, money management and civic responsibility. Staffing will be by an independent living specialist and residential staff. Supervision while not as extensive as that of a dormitory or cottage environment, will be provided on a 24 hour basis. Staff will be required to have the skills needed to work in a dormitory as well as have demonstrated competence in teaching independent living skills.

Referral to other agencies includes the referral of children or families to appropriate community, regional and/or state agencies to provide residential placement.

Residential services costs remain the responsibility of the State.

STATE ROLE--INTERPRETER TRAINING PROGRAM:

Basic Skills. A qualified educational interpreter in Nebraska should meet the following guidelines:

A. The educational interpreter will follow the Interpreter Code of Ethics and be in compliance with school district policies and procedures. Qualified interpreters should hold a recognized certificate of competence from a regionally or nationally recognized evaluation organization. The State Board of Education should work with the Nebraska Commission for the Hearing Impaired (NCHI) to set appropriate standards and certification for interpreters. (See Appendix III)

B. The interpreter should have or secure training at either the pre-service or in-service level in the following areas:

- language skills appropriate to the level of the students assigned
- modification of language to meet the linguistic ability of the students assigned
- interpersonal skills needed to successfully interact with the students and educational staff
- ethics of interpreting in a variety of settings and situations
- understanding of the interpreting process and the role of the interpreter and the educational team

C. The educational interpreter should have competence in sign language, interpretation, and transliteration.

D. The educational interpreter will have the skills necessary to interpret or transliterate at normal speaking rates in the sign systems used by students to be served.

E. The educational interpreter should demonstrate sufficient familiarity with the subject/ content areas to interpret/transliterate the vocabulary, processes, and information to the student.

F. The educational interpreter should demonstrate written and oral competence in English grammar and vocabulary.

G. The educational interpreter should be supervised by a certified teacher of the deaf or hard of hearing.

H. The educational interpreter must maintain continuing education units or participate in a course of study to meet the requirements for a school district.

I. The Department of Education in collaboration with the Commission for the Hearing Impaired, universities, colleges, community colleges, schools districts, cooperatives and educational service units will develop educational interpreter guidelines.

J. The Department of Education will establish partnerships with the Commission for the Hearing Impaired, universities, colleges, community colleges, schools districts, cooperatives and educational service units to develop an educational interpreter training program that will facilitate educational interpreters meeting the guidelines.

K. The use of technology will be explored to assure that all areas of the state will have access to the training.

L. The Department of Education will fund the initial development and may fund additional years of the interpreter training program.

STATE ROLE--REGIONAL/STATEWIDE PROGRAMS:

1. The Department of Education will pursue regional/statewide program agreements with school districts, approved cooperatives and educational service units for meeting the educational needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing to begin no later than the 1998-99 school year.

2. At a minimum, three regional/statewide programs will be developed to geographically represent the east, central and western segments of the state.

3. All school districts and approved cooperatives (even if they do not enter into state approved regional/statewide program agreement) will continue to be eligible for special education reimbursement/payment if they meet the standards of Rule 51.

4. School districts, approved cooperatives, and educational services units entering into state approved regional/statewide agreements will receive financial and programmatic incentives from NDE to enhance their programs for children who are deaf or hard of hearing, and meet the specifications outlined in this document for Regional/Statewide Programs. NDE and regional/statewide programs will use Educational Service Standards and Best Practices Guidelines for Students Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Appendix II) in developing programs and in planning for program improvement.

5. In collaboration with state approved regional/statewide programs, the state will design and implement staff development activities in the approved regional/statewide programs that will be involved with the provision of educational services to children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The staff development activities will be designed to meet the needs of regular and special education administrators and teachers, interpreters, related services staff and other personnel. The staff development activities will assist the regional/statewide programs with meeting program specifications.

6. Some children who are deaf or hard of hearing may be unable to receive a free appropriate public education by means of school district, educational service unit, cooperative or regional/statewide agreement programs. The Department of Education will assure that program(s) are provided to meet the needs of any such children. Program design(s) and location(s) will be determined by the needs of the children to be served.

REGIONAL/STATEWIDE PROGRAM ROLES

The Regional/Statewide Program must assure excellence and equity to all children in Nebraska who are deaf or hard of hearing regardless of where they live. The purpose of the Program is to provide a full continuum of service delivery and educational alternatives and options for serving families and children who are deaf or hard of hearing from birth to age 21 years. The Program will build upon existing services, promote the creation of new, cooperative agreements among service providers, and extend and support outreach services in all areas of the state.

To best serve the children of Nebraska who are deaf or hard of hearing, there is a need to build comprehensive educational programming. Teachers of the deaf or hard of hearing may team-teach with regular education teachers in classrooms where there are students who are deaf or hard of hearing as well as hearing students. Successful inclusion programs should cultivate sign skills in the entire student body. Deaf or hard of hearing students should be challenged to compete academically along with hearing students and have the support of deaf or hard of hearing individuals.

To be a state approved regional/statewide program, school districts, approved cooperatives and educational service units must meet the following program specifications:

1. A state approved program will meet the standards of the Nebraska Department of Education (Rule 51) Regulations and Standards for Special Education Programs.

2. Regional/Statewide Program(s) will draw upon school and community resources and will meet state standards including existing specialized and adaptive curricula, with provision of services for children with multiple disabilities, at all levels.

   A primary objective of the program is to encourage collaboration among existing programs and service providers to enhance pedagogical practices thus creating an exemplary, scholarly program that offers innovative educational methods for all students.

   Programs should include transition support programming, including instruction in and opportunities for vocational training and technical education with work study experiences in cooperation with business and industry, post-secondary and independent living skills.

3. With few exceptions, children who are deaf or hard of hearing will participate in school district performance assessment and accountability activities required by Nebraska Department of Education (Rule 10) Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools. The assessment results of children who are deaf or hard of hearing will be disaggregated to provide program evaluation data. Special accommodations and procedures necessary for their participation will be included on the child's IEP. If a child who is deaf or hard of hearing is not participating in school district assessment activities, the rationale for not participating will be included in the IEP and an alternate assessment will be administered.

4. Children who are deaf or hard of hearing will receive accommodations to benefit from the educational program. Such accommodations will include, but not be limited to the following:

   a. Trained teachers of the deaf or hard of hearing who have endorsements in deaf education and can communicate directly with the student in his or her language of choice;
   b. Regular education teachers who have received training to allow them to integrate children who are deaf or hard of hearing into the regular education classroom; and
   c. Interpreters who are skilled in sign-to-voice and voice-to-sign interpretation/ transliteration would be available to students for the extended school day for participation in extracurricular activities including but not limited to sports, clubs and drama.

5. Children who are deaf or hard of hearing will have learning opportunities as well as social interaction with peers who are deaf or hard of hearing as well as with peers who are not deaf or hard of hearing.

   These opportunities will allow children who are deaf or hard of hearing to enter regular education programs and to access extracurricular activities and for children who are not deaf or hard of hearing to access courses or activities designed specifically for the deaf or hard of hearing.

6. Opportunities will be available for all children to learn about deafness, including sign language and have interaction with role models who are deaf or hard of hearing.

7. Decision making in planning for children who are deaf or hard of hearing will include professionals trained in the education of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The educational planning process which includes the multidisciplinary and IEP teams will include a teacher who is endorsed in the area of deaf education.

8. Professionals providing direct services to children who are deaf or hard of hearing will be trained and skilled in this discipline. This includes both regular and special education personnel. Training and retraining for teachers will include, but not be limited to, understanding of the deaf or hard of hearing population and instructional considerations to be made when teaching students who are deaf or hard of hearing in the regular education classroom. Sign language instruction will be offered to teachers and auxiliary staff and incentives will be offered to regular education teachers and staff who complete instruction in various levels of sign language competency.

9. Educational interpreters will meet the state standards established by the State Board of Education.

10. An array of quality education programs allowing movement within the options will be available for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

- The array of educational programs must accommodate both inclusive and self contained instructional environments. As required by federal (IDEA) and state regulations (Rule 51) the array of services available includes: instruction in regular classes; supplemental services such as resource room; intinerate instruction or consultative services to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement; special classes; special schools; home instruction and instruction in hospitals and institutions. Movement within the options will be determined by the child's IEP.

11. Facilities should include access to equipment such as auditory trainers and loop systems, TTYs, closed caption decoders or televisions, text information systems allowing access to intercom and school bell information and emergency warning systems appropriate for use by individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Further accommodations and modifications should include access to all programs, materials, curriculum and opportunities afforded to the regular education students, including but not limited to, sports, clubs and other extracurricular activities.

12. For those students currently attending Nebraska School for the Deaf who may be participating in regional/statewide programs, the transition plan will, if appropriate, allow for instruction in a self-contained environment.

13. Assistance to families will include, but not be limited to, information on sign language classes, summer programs, camps workshops, library of materials, books and videos relating to deafness.

14. Planning, coordination and networking of enrichment activities. Grants, community support and parent payment can be sought to provide a comprehensive program of enrichment activities.

    A program for enrichment activities should be designed with the following goals in mind:

    a. To develop a network of community providers of activities, camps and programs who would be willing to learn about and make necessary adaptations for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Adjunct experiences would be provided to give children who are deaf or hard of hearing skills needed to access enrichment activities such as pre-teaching and practicing rules of sports and sports etiquette prior to joining a sports team.

    b. To develop a continuum of thematic summer educational experiences, special interest camps, project opportunities and social events at all grade levels that would compliment and not compete with one another.

    c. To create an information network for parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing so they could obtain information regarding summer activities locally, statewide and nationwide. This network would also provide information regarding school district and state sponsored educational and camp experiences as well as private tutors and speech pathologists in different geographic areas of the state.

There should be opportunities for parent and sibling involvement in many of these activities.

15. Parents have available information regarding the array of programs in the state.

16. Willingness to accept children who are deaf or hard of hearing from other school district and regional programs.

17. Meet the standards of Nebraska Department of Education (Rule 51) Regulations and Standards for Special Education Programs.

PROGRAM COORDINATION

1. An Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments will be created within the Department of Education to coordinate a statewide system of education and residential services for all deaf or hard of hearing children. The statewide system will:

   1.1 Assist parents and districts in providing access to the full array of programs and services;

   1.2 Oversee and coordinate residential services and placements;

   1.3 Provide an information clearinghouse and service center for the State in matters related to educational/residential deaf or hard of hearing programs and services;

   1.4 Provide a mechanism for quality control, support, and technical assistance to children, families, centers and schools;

   1.5 Organize and coordinate a comprehensive program of outreach support to school districts;

   1.6 Develop a mechanism for the coordination of student and family services across agencies;

   1.7 Assist school districts and educational service units in implementing transition services for students and families including continuing education and work entry;

   1.8 Assist school districts and educational service units in locating qualified personnel;

   1.9 Work with the Nebraska systems for postsecondary education to develop an adequate pool of qualified personnel; and

   1.10 Allow for fluid movement within the fully array of services within the system.

2. The Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments will assist with:

   2.1 The design and coordination of a specialized array of educational programs.

   2.2 The coordination of specialized ongoing professional development and training programs.

   2.3 The development and implementation of a plan for the use of technology to enhance the education of deaf or hard of hearing children.

   2.4 Design and implement a systematic process for data collection.

   2.5. Design and implementation of a system of early identification and intervention services to enhance the early development of communication skills.

2.6. Establishing links with educational service units and special education cooperatives for service coordination; expanding availability of outreach personnel through a program of training, compensation and relocation when appropriate to serve needs; providing itinerant specialists to support school-based programs and adequate specialized staff to cover sparsely populated regions of the state; and developing a network of communication.

3. The Department of Education will seek advice regarding programs for children who are deaf or hard of hearing from the ***Special Education Advisory Council*** **(SEAC)** and the ***Advisory Committee for the Education of Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing***, a standing committee of SEAC.

3.1 Membership on the *Advisory Committee for the Education of Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing* will consist of a balanced representation of individuals who are deaf and individuals who are hard of hearing, parents of children who are deaf and parents of children who are hard of hearing, school district and service agency representatives, state/regional program representatives, and direct service providers. There will also be balanced geographic representation.

3.2 The State Board of Education shall maintain a standing committee, the Advisory Committee for the Education of Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, which should provide suggestions about administration of the program to Department of Education administrators and report recommendations about policy issues to both the Special Education Advisory Council and the State Board of Education for improving education and support services for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

NEXT STEPS

Approval of this report by the State Board of Education will allow the Department of Education to begin collaborative planning necessary for developing regional/statewide program agreements with interested school districts, cooperatives, educational service units, and other service providers. Once the scope of the regional/statewide partnership agreements are determined, the Department of Education will prepare a detailed report, a transition plan, and budget for implementation of the regional/statewide programs, state support services, residential services, interpreter training and, if necessary, state operated programs. It is the intent of the State Board of Education to vacate the current campus of the Nebraska School for the Deaf no later than August 31, 1998. (See Appendix IV)

STATEWIDE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

PROPOSED
TRANSITION PLAN

June, 1997	Establish the Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments, including outreach services. Begin to identify staffing needs. Mail letters of notification to school districts and educational services units regarding the Department of Education's interest in establishing regional/statewide programs. School districts and educational service units submit a letter of interest to the Department of Education regarding their interest in establishing regional/statewide programs.
July, 1997	Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments conducts a meeting(s) for school districts and educational service units interested in becoming a regional/statewide program. Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments begins to provide technical assistance and support to school districts and educational service units developing regional/statewide programs. Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments begins development of interpreter guidelines and training program.
October, 1997	Applications for regional/statewide programs are submitted to the Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments. Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments enters into agreements with school districts and educational services units meeting specifications for regional/statewide programs. Based on regional/statewide agreements, Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments determines additional staff and resource needs. Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments begins further development of residential options.
November, 1997	With the support of the Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments, approved regional/statewide programs and resident school districts conduct IEP meetings for elementary children at NSD.

	Educational interpreter guidelines are completed and training program begins.
January, 1998	With the support of the Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments elementary children from NSD begin to receive services at regional/statewide programs.
April, 1998	With the support of the Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments, approved regional/statewide programs and resident school districts conduct IEP meetings for secondary children at NSD.
August, 1998	With the support of the Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments secondary children from NSD begin to receive services at regional/statewide program (s).
	Current NSD campus is vacated.
September, 2000	Establish standards in rule for educational interpreters.
School Year 2001-2002	Educational interpreters must meet rule standards.

NOTE: The Department of Education will seek advice from the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) and the Advisory Committee for the Education of Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing throughout the transition process and the ongoing development of programs for children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Statewide Educational Programs
and Support Services for
Children Who are Deaf or
Hard of Hearing

Estimated Budget: 1997-98 Transition Plan

Appropriation:		
	$2,706,000 (401)	
	350,000 (025)	
Total	$3,056,000	

Interpreter Training Program	$100,000
Office of Sensory Impaired/Outreach	520,000
Regional Program Development	250,000
State Center Program	2,186,000
TOTAL	$3,056,000

APPENDICES

The following Appendices are intended as "promising practices" guidelines which may be used for program development, improvement and evaluation purposes.

State Board of Education
(June 5, 1997)

Note: ***On 6/5/97, the State Board of Education approved the following as a "promising practices" guideline which may be used for program development, improvement and evaluation purposes.***

PARENT PROGRAMS

Because the success of any student's educational program is dependent on active family involvement, parents should be provided comprehensive information and support related to family-identified needs, educational options, legal rights, adjustment issues, and methods for communicating with their child. Families serve a key role in fostering the communicative, social/emotional and educational development of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Educators and family members must work together to ensure that each family receives the necessary support to:

1. adjust to the needs of the child in the family
2. make informed decisions
3. serve as effective advocates
4. support the development of the child's self esteem
5. communicate in a manner that meets the needs of the child and includes the child as a fully functioning member of the family.

The goal is to be as family centered as possible. As such, program offerings must be flexible and responsive to family-identified needs. Efforts should be made to access informal as well as formal sources of support, and to involve families in ongoing identification of priority needs. Research has demonstrated the value of involving deaf adults and parent mutual support experiences in promoting the psychosocial well being of hearing parents and siblings. Therefore, the proposal includes active involvement of Deaf persons as role models and provision of mutual support opportunities for families.

The program is intended to be comprehensive and inclusive in nature. In order to meet the individual needs of families, program components must include:

1. Services for families in both rural and urban communities
2. Services for families of children spanning the age spectrum (e.g., children from birth to 21)
3. Services for extended family members
4. Services that are responsive to cultural differences

<u>Programs and Services</u>

Parent programs may be provided at local level, through regional programs and/or by the state. Parent programs may be financed by state funding, local resources and/or fees charged to participants.

Services for Families with Newly Identified Children:
A primary goal of this program is to provide families with newly identified children access to services and information through a single, impartial source. To meet this objective, the following strategies should be considered:

1. Services Coordinators shall staff the currently-existing 800 number.
2. Specialty training shall be provided to services coordinators implementing this program, so they are well informed about resources and needs for Deaf/HH students. This approach requires some initial training, but takes advantage of the background services coordinators have in counseling, family needs identification and services networking. Services coordinators may also have the advantage of impartiality/objectivity.
3. Widely advertise the 800# in public and professional communities. Use Internet and public media to encourage 800# use.
4. Develop a coordinated data base of services, agencies, referral sources, school district representatives, for ready access by services coordinators.
5. Develop a system for monitoring contacts, follow-up and disposition on cases.
6. Develop a parent education packet to be sent out to each new family. This packet would provide a general orientation to expectations for working with the school district, and explanation of various options available to families in Nebraska.

In this program families will receive guidance that is tailored to the specific needs of the child and family and is responsive to family-identified needs and concerns.

Strategies to accomplish this goal include:

1. Develop specific recommendations/standards for evaluation of Deaf/HH infants.
2. Provide inservice training to *regional programs* to support them in establishing objective evaluation teams.
3. Provide an objective monitoring mechanism to support regional evaluation teams. Provide ongoing consultation to teams.
4. Develop a resource packet for parents that describes various program options available to them.
5. Provide inservice to *regional program* on needs identification, family-centered practices, counseling techniques and provision of objective guidance.
6. Provide a resource list to programs of skilled providers in ancillary disciplines (e.g., medical/genetic, psychology, OT/PT, etc.)
7. Provide funding to contract for part time trainers for the early intervention component.
8. Explore access to remote site telecast program at UNMC or other state facilities and consider use of this technology for inservice training.

A third program goal is for families to receive support and information from Deaf/HH adults and other parents.

Strategies to accomplish this goal include:

1. Develop a Deaf/HH mentor program (similar to Project SKI*HI). Provide a funding mechanism to support leadership training, home visit travel, etc. Define roles and relationships of mentors to local service providers.

2. Develop a statewide parent support network. This network should include training for parent leaders and "pilot" or "key" parents, willing to provide individual contacts and support. Provide a funded position for leadership of the parent-to-parent network in the state.
3. Support the parent organization in the development of parent friendly materials (e.g., "Welcome Wagon" packet with informative literature, videotapes, etc.)
4. Partner with parent groups to identify needs and develop regional workshops for parent support and education.

Services for all Families:
An essential goal for all families is that they will communicate effectively with their Deaf/HH children.

To meet the needs of families who sign, the Statewide Program should:

1. Provide guidelines for family sign instruction tailored to specific age levels. These programs should be relevant to the communication needs of parents and children.
2. Provide resource materials/curricula to support family sign instruction.
3. Involve Deaf mentors in family sign instruction.
4. Develop special programs and materials for siblings and peers.
5. Integrate sign instruction in regular education programs.
6. Provide mechanisms for providing feedback to signers and assist them in setting goals for sign/interaction improvement.
7. Sponsor special events to promote enhanced communication (e.g., Family camps; family weekends; silent weekends; summer workshops; regional weekend workshops).

To meet the needs of families in auditory/oral programs, the statewide program should:

1. Provide resource materials/curricula designed to guide parents in stimulation of audition, speech and language throughout daily routines.
2. Provide access to successful adult role models.
3. Provide workshops and programs supporting parents in implementation of auditory/oral methods.
4. Develop parent support network of parents using A/O methods; Seek to strengthen A G Bell affiliate chapter.
5. Sponsor regional weekend workshops/programs on strategies for strengthening communication.

Another goal for all families is that they will have ready access to relevant sources of information and support.

To accomplish this goal, the statewide program should:

1. Develop an e-mail/chat network for parents in the state.

2. Develop a WWW site with continual updates of information, notices of events and meetings, etc.
3. Coordinate a data base of available resources in the state and publish regular updates (hard copy and Internet version).
4. Produce a parent newsletter that informs parents of upcoming events, new developments, etc.
5. Provide funds for a part time position to manage information dissemination to parents.
6. Conduct needs assessments to determine most relevant topics and provide ongoing workshop series for parents throughout the *regional programs* (e.g., topics might include IEP/IFSP process, legal rights, assistive technology, handling transitions, positive parenting, parenting teens, language and literacy development, career planning, etc.).
7. Provide training for families to support them in preparing for transitions.

Another primary goal is that families will receive support to promote the social/emotional development of their Deaf/HH child.

To achieve this goal, the statewide program should:

1. Provide weekend and summer social events/programs for children in each *regional program.*
2. Develop a summer camp experience for Deaf/HH youth in Nebraska.
3. Promote an e-mail pen pal network for Deaf/HH youth.
4. Adopt a social skills curriculum (e.g., PATHS Providing Alternative Thinking Skills; Dr. Mark Greenberg) throughout the statewide program and train both parents and professionals in its implementation.
5. Provide parenting classes that include instruction from Deaf/HH adults on approaches that promote self esteem and social/emotional adjustment in the family.
6. Develop a resource list for mental health and parenting support options throughout the state.
7. Support parents in accessing Deaf community and develop understanding of Deaf Culture. Develop a parent/Deaf community link (e.g., like Friends of the Deaf community program in Lincoln; sponsor joint events for the children, families and Deaf community members).

Note: ***On 6/5/97, the State Board of Education approved the following as a "promising practices" guideline which may be used for program development, improvement and evaluation purposes.***

This document is not intended to replicate requirements in existing rules, such as Rule 51 or Rule 24. It is also not intended to be a complete description of the program elements and features needed to meet the unique needs of children who are deaf and hard of hearing.[1]

Standard 1: Qualifications of an Audiologist

The professional who assesses and diagnoses hearing loss should be certified and licensed in audiology by the Nebraska State Board of Health and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

Standard 2: Assessment of hearing

For children aged three years and older, audiological evaluations should be conducted annually for those children who use amplification following guidelines for appropriate pediatric audiological assessment.

Appropriate pediatric audiological assessment includes, but is not limited to:

- compiling and interpreting available audiometric information
- determining the need for further pre-assessment information, including otologic consultation
- administering and interpreting a complete audiological assessment, which shall include the following, as appropriate:
  - > case history
  - > otoscopic examination
  - > acoustic immittance measurements
  - > pure tone audiometry
  - > speech reception or detection threshold
  - > speech recognition
  - > speech recognition in noise
  - > speech recognition in noise with both auditory and visual inputs
  - > most comfortable loudness level
  - > uncomfortable loudness level
  - > referral for special tests, including auditory brainstem response, otoacoustic emissions, site of lesion
  - > modified testing procedures, including behavior observation, visual reinforcement, and conditional play audiometry

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[1] See National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students Educational Service Guidelines. 1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 320, Alexandria, VA 22314

- selecting, administering, and interpreting tests to determine the need for and appropriateness of sensory aids such as: hearing aids, cochlear implants, FM systems, and/or tactile aids, which shall include the following, as appropriate:
  - > speech audiometry (quiet and noise: auditory and auditory-visual)
  - > functional-gain measurement
  - > real-ear measurement
  - > electroacoustic analysis
  - > auditory skill development measurements
  - >in the case of cochlear implants, referral to a specialized team is required
- identifying co-existing factors that may require further evaluation
- determining the need for assessment and/or treatment, using both school and community resources as appropriate.
  - > these may include the influence of the hearing loss on communication, learning, psychosocial adjustment, and adaptive behavior
  - >these may include medical issues such as: genetics, otology, ophthalmology, neurology
- for children aged three years and older, audiological evaluations (including assessment of sensory aids) should be conducted annually for those children who use amplification.

Standard 3: Assessment of hearing in infants from birth to three

For infants from birth to 36 months, the standards established by the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association (ASHA)[2] should be followed.

The following are from the ASHA guidelines, but are not intended to reflect the entire document.

- the following children should be referred for audiologic evaluation
  - > any child who failed a newborn hearing screening
  - > any child who is suspected by a parent/primary caregiver, educator, or primary care physician of having hearing loss
  - > any child who exhibits abnormal auditory behavior or delayed speech and language development
  - > any child not previously screened who is identified at high risk for hearing loss
  - > any child surviving the NICU or a high-risk illness
- for children under 6 months of age, a combination of electrophysiologic assessment , acoustic immittance assessment, and behavioral assessment should be used

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2 American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (1991). Guidelines for the audiologic assessment of children from birth through 36 months of age. Asha, 33 (Suppl.5), 37-43.

- for children between 6 and 36 months of age, a combination of behavioral assessment and acoustic immittance assessment are often sufficient, but ABR might also be indicated in some situations
- audiologic evaluations should be conducted every six months, or more frequently if progression of the loss is suspected
- although a series of evaluations yields the best information to make management decisions, the diagnosis and remediation of any existing hearing loss should not be delayed because of an inability to reliably complete any particular test

Standard 4: Qualifications of professionals who assess communication competence

The professional who assesses communication competence shall

- **hold appropriate certification and/or licensure in one of the following areas: speech-language pathology, education of the deaf and hard of hearing, educational audiology and have expertise and experience in assessing deaf and hard of hearing children**
- **have skill and experience in selecting, modifying, and administering assessment procedures for deaf and hard of hearing students at various developmental levels and interpreting the results**
- **have knowledge of communication development including both manual and spoken language**
- **be proficient in the student's language. If this is not possible a qualified interpreter should be used. However, this is not a preferable option for evaluating language skills.**
- **be competent in assessing interaction**
  - **> between parent/caregiver and child**
  - **> among peers and the child**
  - **> within a classroom**

Standard 5: Qualifications of professionals who assess intelligence and social skills

The professional who assesses intelligence and social skills shall:

- **be certified and/or licensed in psychology or school psychology**
- **have skills and experience in selecting, modifying, and administering assessment procedures for deaf and hard of hearing students and interpreting their results**
- **preferably be proficient in the student's language of communication. If this is not possible, a qualified interpreter, who understands the process of interpreting during assessments, shall be used.**

Standard 6: Qualifications of professionals who assess academic achievement

Academic achievement of both deaf and hard of hearing students should be monitored at least annually because the impact of hearing loss varies in terms of its educational significance. Hard of hearing students can be at particular risk because their needs are often underestimated. It is incumbent upon the assessment teams to make decisions about what assessments are needed and who should conduct them. A combination of formal evaluations and routine classroom-based evaluation should be used. Although there are times when professionals without expertise in the area of deafness may appropriately conduct the formal assessment, in the majority of cases the professional who assess academic skills shall:

- be certified and endorsed as an educator of the deaf and hard of hearing or
- be licensed as a psychologist or school psychologist with specific expertise in the area of hearing loss and
- have skills and experience in selecting, modifying, and administering assessment procedures for deaf and hard of hearing students and interpreting their results, and
- preferably be proficient in the student's language of communication. If this is not possible, a qualified interpreter, who understands the process of interpreting during assessments, shall be used.

Standard 7: Qualifications of professionals who assess motor or vocational skills

The Professional who assesses motor or vocational skill shall:

- be certified in their respective profession
- have skills and experience in selecting, modifying, and administering assessment procedures for deaf and hard of hearing students and interpreting their results
- be proficient in the student's language of communication. If this is not possible, a qualified interpreter, who understands the process of interpreting during assessments, shall be used.

Standard 8: Placement Decisions

Schools districts and parents should keep in mind that placement decisions must be based on the child's IEP. In developing an IEP for a child who is deaf or hard of hearing, the following factors should be considered: a) communication needs and the child's and family's

preferred mode of communication, b) linguistic needs, c) severity of hearing loss and potential for using residual hearing, d) academic level and ability to sustain academic growth, and e) social, emotional, and cultural needs, including opportunities for peer interactions and communication[3]. Furthermore, consideration of the LRE provisions of IDEA as part of the placement decision must always be in the context of the LRE in which appropriate services can be provided. Factors to consider are: a) the types of services needed, b) access and availability of those services, and c) the number of students being served. All options and procedures must be explained to the parents. Parents should be allowed to be active participants in the placement of their child.

Standard 9: Development of the IEP and IFSP

The multidisciplinary team approach should be used to develop the IEP or IFSP.

The IEP or IFSP should:

- be reviewed by qualified personnel
- be a working document that guides the child's educational program and specifically addresses the identified needs and recommendations made by the assessment team
- access a full range of placement options and services must be available to the extent necessary to implement each child's IEP or IFSP
- ensure that placement decisions must be in the context of the LRE in which the IEP can be implemented. Factors that should be considered in determining placement include:
  - > the communication needs of the child
  - > family input
  - > the family's mode of communication
  - > the severity of hearing loss and potential for using residual hearing
  - > the child's ability to sustain reasonable academic growth in that setting
  - > social and emotional needs, including opportunities for peer interactions and communication
  - > the availability of qualified personnel
  - > the communication skills of the child's peers

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3 Federal Register at 57 Fed. Reg 49274, October 30, 1992: Deaf Students Education Services; Policy Guidance; Notice. See also National Association of State Directors of Special Education. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students educational service guidelines. Appendix F.

Standard 10: Placement options

The IEP or IFSP team should recommend placement options that:

- ensure that families are informed of and understand placement options and services within the state of Nebraska
- a full range of educational options are explored
- ensure that the child receive ongoing monitoring in all areas of concern by qualified personnel
- ensure that individuals providing direct services are qualified and competent
- ensure the availability of assertive technology and ensure that the child is competent in its use
- monitor the quality of all direct and support service providers
- teach and encourage hearing peers to learn to communicate effectively with the deaf or hard of hearing child
- ensure that families are able to be active partners in all aspects of the child's placement and education
- ensure access to support services
- ensure access to extracurricular activities
- ensure that the parents and the child has access to knowledge about other individuals with hearing losses, the deaf community, and their rights as an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing
- ensure that interpreters are qualified according to standards for educational interpreters in the state of Nebraska

Standard 11: Social needs of students who are deaf and hard of hearing

Social development of each child is a vital aspect of any educational program. The social and emotional needs of children who are deaf and hard-of-hearing must be considered an important issue in educational programming. Any evaluation of a child's placement should consider the student as a member of a social group, and not just his/her academic standing. Students who are deaf and hard of hearing should have equal access to extracurricular activities, with an interpreter if necessary[4].

Standard 12: Composition of the Multidisciplinary team

The child's multidisciplinary team should include professionals who have the specialized knowledge and skills needed to serve deaf and hard of hearing children. The following professionals must be included in the multidisciplinary team:

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4 See footnote 2

- **the child's teacher or teacher qualified to teach a child that age;**
- **an educator endorsed to teach a child with a hearing loss;**
- **a speech-language pathologist,**
- **a school district administrator or a designated representative, and;**
- **an audiologist**

The following professionals may be called upon to serve as members of the MDT:

- **the child's interpreter, if one is required[5]**
- **a psychologist**
- **an occupational and/or physical therapist**
- **a case manager**
- **a social worker**
- **a rehabilitation professional**
- **educators endorsed in other special needs areas**

Standard 13: Composition of the IEP or IFSP team

The child's IEP or IFSP team should include professionals who have the specialized knowledge and skills needed to serve deaf and hard of hearing children. Parents must be informed that they have the right to include other individuals in the IEP or IFSP team. The student should be included when appropriate. In addition to team members specified in Rule 51, the following professionals should be included in the IEP or IFSP team:

- **an educator endorsed to teach a child with a hearing loss**
- **the interpreter who works with the student, if possible**
- **a speech-language pathologist**
- **a services coordinator, in the case of an IFSP**

In adherence to Rule 51 the following professionals must be included in the IEP or IFSP team:

- a representative of the resident school district who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of special education

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5 The child's interpreter should not interpret at the meeting if expected to ccontribute to the process.

- the child's teacher or teachers
- for students attending nonpublic schools, a representative of the nonpublic school
- for children receiving services from an approved service agency, a representative of the service agency
- other individuals at the discretion of the parent or the school district
- for children evaluated for the first time, at least one member of the MDT evaluation team
- for students whose need for transition services is being considered, a representative of the school district responsible for providing or supervising transition services and a representative of each other participating agency providing transition services

The following professionals may be called upon to serve as members of the IEP or IFSP team:

- an audiologist
- an occupational and/or physical therapist
- a rehabilitation professional
- an educator endorsed in learning disabilities
- an educator endorsed in behavioral disorders

Standard 14: Qualifications of managers and service providers

All professionals who manage the provision of services to a deaf or hard of hearing student shall hold appropriate licensure and/or certification from the state and should understand how to communicate effectively with the child, understand the communication and learning needs of deaf and hard of hearing students, and be knowledgeable in the use of technology and sensory devices.

The professionals who provide services to a deaf or hard of hearing student should comply with the following guidelines.

- Teachers endorsed in education of the deaf and hard of hearing should be able to:
  - > communicate with the child in their own language
  - > knowledgeable and experienced in the age range in which they provide services
- Audiologists should hold valid licensure issued by the Nebraska State Board of Health. In addition, audiologists should be:

- > knowledgeable of the options available for educating deaf and hard of hearing students
- > able to communicate with students at their language levels using effective communication methods

- Educational interpreters should be qualified according to standards in the state of Nebraska.
- Paraeducators should be able to:
  - > communicate with students at their language levels using effective communication methods
  - > monitor amplification, which includes knowing volume settings and how to determine whether it is in working order, under the direction of a professional
  - > know how to use other assertive technology
- Resource room teachers and regular classroom teachers should ensure:
  - > that amplification is monitored, which includes knowing volume settings and how to determine whether it is in working order and the child uses it as prescribed by the IEP, under the direction of a professional
  - > understand the accommodations required for the student in order to have access to the classroom
  - > understand the impact of style of teaching and classroom management on students who are deaf or hard of hearing
  - > understand the role and responsibilities of the educational interpreter if one is required and understand the limitations of using an interpreter to access an educational program
  - > ensure that the child has access to assistive technology
  - > access consultative services from professionals with expertise in the area of hearing loss
  - > provide the student with the teacher's outlines, overheads, and visual materials

- School psychologists and school counselors should hold valid certificates from the Nebraska Department of Education. They should be able to:
  - > communicate with students at their language levels using the student's language of communication. If this not possible, an interpreter may be used, although this is a less preferable option
  - > understand the impact of hearing loss on educational, psycho-social, and emotional development
  - > understand the resources specifically available to students who are deaf and hard and hearing after they leave high school
  - > understand the limitations of using an interpreter to provide counseling services and be able to make appropriate accommodations as necessary.

Standard 15: Classroom and Environmental Needs

Classrooms should provide an appropriate learning environment for deaf and hard of hearing students. This may require modifications to optimize a child's ability to hear, to participate in classroom discussions, or to see the teacher, interpreter, other students, and visual materials.

These modifications may include:

- special amplification systems[6]
- use of captioned materials and decoders
- use of visual signaling devices
- preferential seating
- providing the student with the teacher's outlines, overheads, visual materials
- providing notetakers or real-time captioning
- providing TTYs
- other assistive augmentative devices
- acoustical materials and/or structural modifications to reduce noise and reverberation[7]

Standard 16: Access to Educational Programs

Children should have complete access to all instruction, school support services, classroom discourse and social interaction within the school environment. They should be able to participate in all aspects of the educational program with equal status to their hearing peers, with appropriate interpreter services provided. School programs should insure that a placement site provides sufficient opportunities for active and authentic involvement. Children who are deaf and hard of hearing should be able to be as independent as their hearing peers, even though they may use interpreters and other support services.

Standard 17: Parent Education

Because the success of any student's educational program is dependent on active family involvement, school programs should provide parents with comprehensive information related to family

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6 See American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association, (1994). Guidelines for Fitting and Monitoring FM Systems. Asha, 36 (March, Suppl. 12), pp. 1-9.

7 American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association, (1995, March). Position Statement and Guidelines for Acoustics in Educational Settings. Asha, 37 (Suppl. 14, pp.15)

identified needs, educational options, legal rights, support groups, and methods for communicating with their child.

School programs must provide parents with information regarding

- range of educational options and educational placements
- communication options
- legislation, rights, and due process procedures
- assistive technology, such as decoders, TTYs, and amplification, where to purchase it and how to use it
- the Deaf Community as a cultural group and how to contact Deaf adults
- development of language, cognition, motor skills, and social-emotional skills
- state agencies, parent groups, and advocacy groups
- services that are available to the family
- classes, programs and materials to assist learning sign language
- classes, programs and materials to facilitate auditory/oral skills

Standard 18: Support in learning sign communication

Because most learning occurs in the home, for children who use sign language to communicate, their families must be supported in learning to sign. Home programs, classes, workshops, or videotaped curriculums should be provided until the parents are capable of communicating with their child. Parents and children should have access to instructors who are fluent in the language or signing system.

Standard 19: Programs for Birth to Three

For programs for children from birth to 36 months, the standards established by the joint committee of the ASHA and the Council on Education of the Deaf (CED)[8] should be followed.

The following are from the guidelines, but are not intended to reflect the entire document.

- management of children from birth to three require a team approach and a strong family focus in the development and implementation of the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)
- professionals must be skilled at
  - > working with families and facilitating parent/caregiver/professional collaboration

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8 See National Association of State Directors of Special Education. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students Educational Service Guidelines. Appendix E.

- providing information of the range of educational and other related services available for the child and family
- administering and interpreting formal and informal assessments of children from birth to three with hearing loss
- developing and implementing an appropriate management program for the child and their family

Standard 20: Qualifications of interpreters in an educational setting

Interpreters who work in an educational setting shall have the skills necessary to interpret or transliterate a conversation or presentation at a normal rate. The minimum requirement for interpreters who use sign language or sign systems is:

- **certification from the Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf or**
- **a competency rating of three or above on the Mid-American Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST) or**
- **a competency rating of three or above on the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA)**

The minimum requirement for interpreters who use oral communication is

- **to be established**

The minimum requirement for interpreters who use cued speech is

- **Cued Speech Transliterator National Certification Examination, Transliteration Skills Certificate (TSC: 2).**

In addition, educational interpreters should have knowledge in the following areas:

- **language skills appropriate to the linguistic ability of the student**
- **the interpreting process and the role of the interpreter as a member of the educational team**
- **ability to communicate an interpreter's role within the educational setting**
- **deaf culture, assistive technology and sensory devices**

Standard 21: Provisional Certification for Interpreters

Those interpreters not meeting minimum requirements, and sign language interpreters who have at least a QAST or EIPA rating of level one, are eligible for a non-renewable provisional certificate. Interpreters

will be given two years from the date of their provisional certificate to become certified. A training and evaluation plan shall be developed by the local school district, following guidelines approved by NDE and NCHI.

Standard 22: Supervision, Evaluation, and Training of Interpreters

The educational interpreter must be supervised and evaluated by an administrator, who is assisted by a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing who is knowledgeable of sign language and interpreting and/or a lead interpreter or interpreter coordinator whose rating on the QAST or EIPA is level 4 or 5 or who possesses RID certification. Interpreters not meeting minimum standards or sign language interpreters rated at level three will be evaluated annually. All other interpreters will be evaluated every three years. Evaluation of interpreting skills must be conducted by a trained evaluation team.

Certified interpreters unable to maintain the minimum requirements will be placed on probation for six months and must be re-evaluated prior to the end of probation. Failure to meet minimum standards is grounds for loss of certification.

Regardless of the skill level of the educational interpreter, fifteen clock hours of continuing education units of professional development per year will be required. They should be attained in areas of spoken or sign communication, interpreting/transliterating skills, linguistic and cultural studies, roles and responsibilities of interpreters, and other areas relevant to the interpreting situation.

The Nebraska Department of Education, in cooperation with the Nebraska Commission for the Hearing Impaired, will develop and maintain guidelines.[9]

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9 See Guidelines for Sign Language Interpreters, March 12, 1993, available from NCHI or NDE.

Standard 23: Reimbursement for Interpreter Services

The Department of Education shall reimburse school districts for services of certified interpreters/transliterators on a graded reimbursement scale. For purposes of reimbursement, three levels are established.

> Reimbursement Level A:	RID certification QAST Level 5 EIPA Level 5 Cued Speech: TSC: 4-Expert RID Oral Transliterating Certification: OTC or OIC
> Reimbursement Level B:	QAST Level 3 or 4 EIPA Level 3 or 4 Cued Speech: TSC: 3-Competent Appropriate equivalency for oral interpreters
> Reimbursement Level C:	Provisional Certification

Note: On 6/5/97 the State Board of Education approved the following as a "promising practices" guideline which may be used for program development, improvement and evaluation purposes.

GUIDELINES FOR SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

INTRODUCTION

Interpreting for deaf students in our nation's schools is a relatively recent development, extending back only about 25 years. It is both a product of, and an enabling factor in, the mainstreaming movement for deaf students that began nationally at the postsec. idary level in the 1960s and gained added impetus through Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This mainstreaming movement was extended in 1974 to include the education of deaf students at the elementary and secondary levels with the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142 /IDEA).

With the emergence of the educational mainstreaming movement, first at the postsecondary level, and then at the elementary and secondary levels, the need became evident for interpreting services on behalf of deaf students, together with their teachers and hearing classmates, in educational settings of all kinds and at all levels throughout the country. Report of National Task Force on Educational Interpreting, 1989

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for school administrators, teachers, and other educators working with interpreters in educational settings in Nebraska. Each educational agency should define its own policies and procedures regarding educational interpreting. The following information will be of assistance in insuring quality services for deaf/hard of hearing students.

BASIC SKILLS

A qualified educational interpreter in Nebraska should meet the following guidelines:

A. The educational interpreter should follow the Interpreter Code of Ethics and be in compliance with school district policies and procedures. Qualified interpreters should hold a recognized certificate of competence from a regionally or nationally recognized evaluation organization. A minimum requirement is a competency rating of three or above on the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) or on the Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST); or CI, CT, or CSC certificate from the Registry of the Interpreters for the Deaf (RID); or other recognized educational interpreter assessment instrument.

B. The interpreter should have or secure training at either the pre-service or inservice level in the following areas:

- language skills appropriate to the level of the students assigned
- modification of language to meet the linguistic ability of the students assigned,
- interpersonal skills needed to successfully interact with the students and educational staff,
- ethics of interpreting in a variety of settings and situations,
- understanding of the interpreting process and the role of the interpreter and the educational team, and,

C. The educational interpreter should have competence in sign language, interpretation, and transliteration (voice-to-sign, sign-to-voice or oral-to-oral) as determined by an evaluation process, as determined by the individual education plan ~~and based on student needs.~~

D. The educational interpreter will have the skills necessary to interpret or transliterate at normal speaking rates in the sign systems used by students to be served. These languages and systems may include: American Sign Language, Pidgin Signed English, Manually Coded English, or Signing Exact English II.

E. The educational interpreter should demonstrate sufficient familiarity with the subject/content areas to interpret/transliterate the vocabulary, processes, and information to the student.

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F. The educational interpreter should demonstrate written and oral competence in English grammar and vocabulary.

G. The educational interpreter must maintain their certification/licensure. ~~The educational interpreter should be evaluated regularly by a team of trained evaluators qualified and fluent in sign language and interpreting~~.

H. The educational interpreter must be supervised, preferably by a certified teacher of the deaf or hard of hearing. ~~hearing impaired~~

I. The educational interpreter must maintain continuing education units or participate in a course of study to meet the requirements for a school district.

CERTIFICATION AND HIRING PRACTICES

~~Education agencies should establish~~ ~~m~~Minimum certification guidelines for interpreters shall. ~~These may~~ include completion of the Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST) - Level 3, inclusion in the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), and/or the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) - Level III. (Williams & Schick). ~~Oral Interpreting Certificate from A.G. Bell, RID.~~

The person hired to provide interpreting services should have skills appropriate for the expected assignment prior to be being assigned. If needed a training and evaluation plan should be developed to ensure the interpreter acquires skills for educational interpreters within the first two years of employment as educational interpreters. Continued full and part-time employment should be contingent on progress toward completion of training and evaluation requirements. School districts and approved cooperatives must submit annually before September 30, reports which demonstrate that interpreters provided are making progress toward meeting the guidelines. The report shall include courses or workshops taken, names of program providers and shall include a 20 minute tape, audio and video, of the interpreter working in the educational setting.

TRAINING, SUPERVISION, AND EVALUATION

Regardless of the skill level of educational interpreters, continuing inservice and on-the-job training should be planned and conducted. Ongoing training should allow interpreters to improve their signing and transliterating skills. The training should increase knowledge about language sign systems, intellectual, and emotional development of the students they serve and new developments in deaf education and awareness of deaf culture. The training needs to develop skills to work effectively as team participants, and to successfully carry out their responsibilities to students and educators. Documentation of training, both inservice and on-the-job, should be maintained.

Educational interpreters should be supervised on a continuing basis by a certified teacher. An educator who is knowledgeable about sign language and interpreting should provide consultation to the teacher and interpreter regarding job-related issues; this educator may be a school district administrator or teacher, ESU staff member, NDE or NSD consultant, or other qualified person. This person will also develop and communicate the school's grievance procedure.

The purpose of ongoing training and supervision should be to assist educational interpreters in evaluating their job performance, acknowledging their strengths and identifying areas needing further development. ~~In addition, interpreters should participate in an evaluation process on an annual basis that focuses on the skills unique to interpreting and transliterating. This evaluation should involve a team of qualified sign language evaluators, such as the EIPA (Williams & Schick).~~

JOB DESCRIPTION

The job description for educational interpreters, along with the Code of Ethics, provides the framework for defining the role of the interpreter. It offers direction to the interpreter and educator in determining appropriate tasks for the interpreter, and it can serve as a measuring tool for evaluating the interpreter's job performance. The job description and school district policies provide parameters for the relationship between interpreters and the district administration.

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Appendix A

Sample Job Description

I. The Educational Interpreter:

a. provides interpreting/transliterating and other support services to students who are Deaf or hard of hearing;
b. facilitates communication among students with hearing impairments (HI), their hearing peers, the classroom teacher, and other personnel in the school system;
c. functions as a member of the special education team and assists in achieving the instructional objectives of the Individual Education Plan (IEP); and
~~d.~~ prepares for daily activities by discussing with the classroom teacher the planned activities and instructional goals of films, videos, and speakers, or by studying content area, lesson plans, outlines or appropriate materials to receive such information and be allowed preparation time to do those activites;
d. continues developing skills necessary to perform job responsibilities; and
~~f.~~ e. maintains an adult-child relationship with all children (hearing and deaf).

II. Other duties that may be performed if qualified:

a. interpret extracurricular activities, field trips, parent meetings, conferences, telephone calls, and workshops;
b. assist with decisions about seating arrangements, distance, and lighting;
c. to provide input to the IEP and multi disciplinary team;
d. discuss observation of HI students, students' request for help and progress of students with the special education teacher;
e. tutoring;
f. note-taking;
g. behavior management assistance;
h. teaching sign language to students in mainstream classrooms with HI child and/or staff;
i. provide in-service to staff if needed/requested (role of interpreter, cultural issues);
j. assist the student with language skills related to behavior if so directed by the classroom teacher;
k. facilitate and clarify appropriate social interaction with peers;
l. complete paper-work as related to the interpreting task;
n. oral interpreting

Clearly defining the role of the interpreter and informing all staff members of that role can prevent misunderstandings. The educational interpreter is not a paraeducator. They should not be expected to perform such tasks as: teaching, checking papers, developing teaching materials, bulletin boards, monitoring the class in the teacher's absence, duplicating materials, taking attendance or lunch count, taking slips/items to the office, lunch/hall duty, completing report cards, and the like. The duties of an interpreter may be expanded to deviate from the job description if agreed upon by the interpreter, the student, the deaf educator, and an administrative representative.

Rest periods need to be provided to avoid an occupational injury (Repetitive Motion Syndrome). At the same time, interpreting for extended periods without break stresses muscles, tendons, and nerve channels. Educational interpreters may experience physical fatigue, even pain, in hands, wrists, arms, shoulders, and upper back due to the repetitive nature of the motions and the uncomfortable positions demanded in some interpreting situations. In addition, educational interpreters are, on some occasions, required to work in extreme conditions, such as interpreting physical education classes outside in the cold. As a result, educational interprters are at high risk for upper extremity overuse, even potentially resulting in Repetitive Stress Injury (RSI) or Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS). Because of these mental and physical stresses, educational interpreters need recovery time scheduled into their day. It is advisable when an interpreting assignment continues without interruption for a period of two hours or more that interpreters work in teams of two and alternate the roles of active interpreter and support or feed interpreter for intervals of twenty minutes.

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Appendix B

SAMPLE

FEE SCHEDULE AND CAREER LADDER

Educational interpreters possess specialized skills and fill a unique role in serving students and teachers; compensation for the job done by interpreters needs to reflect their contribution to the educational program. Opportunities need to be provided for interpreters to improve their compensation based upon improved skills and experience.

Sample Fee Schedules and Career Ladders

~~Beginning Interpreter~~ Advanced Beginner/Intermediate
~~starting pay range $6.50 to $9.50 per hour with standard benefits;~~

- minimum requirement is QAST Level III/EIPA III
- no formal training/college degree or certification with
- commitment to work toward completion of Interpreter Training Program/Courses.

Advancement based on:

- completion of interpreter training program or college degree in related area;
- merit increases based on efforts to improve skills via classes, workshops, and CEUs;
- years of experience ~~and~~
- higher rating on state assessment tool and
- more endorsements

~~Skilled Interpreter~~ Advanced/Accomplished

- ~~recommended minimum salary $9.50 per hour with standard benefits;~~ EIPA/QAST Level 5
- interpreter Training Program graduate or college degree in related area; and/or
- highly developed manual communication skills as assessed by recognized regional/national assessment tool (QAST, RID, EIPA).

Advancement based on:

- annual evaluation by supervisor (and merit);
- completion of CEUs as approved by school district;
- years of experience; ~~and~~
- higher rating on a recognized assessment tool and
- completion of a four-year interpreter training program.

~~Sample Minimum Qualifications~~ Best Practices

Associate Degree in Interpreting preferred, or minimum of 62 college credits (semester), or minimum qualifications on the state assessment tool.

- Knowledge of the Interpreter Code of Ethics.
- Ability to communicate an interpreter's role within the educational setting.
- Knowledge of deaf culture.
- Fluent in manual communication: sign-to-voice and voice-to-sign, appropriate to job assignment with working knowledge of various communication systems/languages: ASL, PSE, SEE I & II, Signed English, CASE, or tactile method.
- Ability to provide oral interpreting/transliterating appropriate to job assignment.
- Knowledge of current technology for the deaf and hard of hearing

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SAMPLE

JOB DESCRIPTION ANALYSIS
Educational Interpreter

Instructions Analyze the current job description to determine if it contains the components listed below. Check those Hems which are included in the job description. In the space provided, note suggestions for improving the Job description.

____1. Are all of the following sections included in the job description?
- ____Position title
- ____Position setting
- ____Qualifications
- ____Rationale/Purpose for the position
- ____Orientation and training requirements
- ____Duties and responsibilities
- ____Time and hours
- ____Duration of the position
- ____Evaluation/Supervision guidelines
- ____Salary/Benefits

_____2. Is the job title appropriate and reflective of job duties?

_____3. Does the job description include enough detail about expectations for the position?

_____4. Does the job description provide a true description of what the educational interpreter is currently doing?

_____5. Does the description minimize the abilities and/or potential of the educational interpreter to perform specific educational tasks? Does it demand too much?

_____6. Is the description of the teacher-interpreter relationship sufficiently detailed? Are relations with other personnel described?

_____7. Are the educational interpreter's responsibilities to and for students detailed?

_____8. Does the supervision section adequately inform the educational interpreter about how s/he will be supervised?

_____9. Does the job description provide direction for the development of interpreter's skills. e.g. inservice or training plan?

_____10. Are the procedures/methods to evaluate the interpreter's performance described?

_____11. Were all appropriate personnel, including the educational interpreter, consulted in developing the job description?

Comments and Suggestions:

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Adopted from Project PARA, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Appendix D

CODE OF ETHICS
BY
Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc.

I. Interpreter/Transliterator shall keep all assignments related information strictly confidential.

II. Interpreter/Transliterator shall render the message faithfully, always convey the content and spirit of the speaker, using language most readily understood by the person(s) whom they serve.

III. Interpreter/Transliterator shall not counsel, advise, or interject personal opinions.

IV. Interpreter/Transliterator shall accept assignments using discretion with regard to skill, setting, and the consumers involved.

V. Interpreter/Transliterator shall request compensation for services in a professional and judicious manner.

VI. Interpreter/Transliterator shall function in a manner appropriate to the situation.

VII. Interpreter/Transliterator shall strive to further knowledge and skills through participation in workshops, professional meetings, interaction with professional colleagues and reading of current literature in the field.

VIII. Interpreter/Transliterator by virtue of membership in or certification by the R.I.D. Inc. shall strive to maintain high professional standards in compliance with the Code of Ethics.

This Code of Ethics applies to all members of the Registry of Interprets for the Deaf, Inc. and all certified nonmembers.

Functional Description of QAST Levels:

Level I is the entry level beginner and should not be used in the following: legal, mental health, educational, platform, serious medical, critical situations of any kind.

Level II is an intermediate level beginner and should not be used in the following settings: legal, mental health, educational, serious medical, critical situations of any kind.

Level III is an advanced beginner level and should not be used in the following settings: legal, mental health, serious medical, critical situations of any kind.

Level IV is a qualified level and can function well as an interpreter/transliterator. Should not be used in civil or criminal court cases or extensive mental health therapy.

Level V is an accomplished level. This person can function as an interpreter/transliterator in a majority of situations. Use of professional judgement is indicated.

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Appendix E

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID) Code of Ethics With Guidelines for Educational Interpreters

(In these guidelines the term "interpreting" is used generically to refer to interpreting and transliterating.)

A. Interpreters/Transliterators shall keep all assignment-related information strictly confidential.

Guidelines for Educational Interpreters:

A. The educational interpreter may discuss assignment-related information only with other members of the educational team (e.g., interpreters, teachers, supervisors) who are directly responsible for the educational program of the hearing-impaired student(s) for whom the interpreter interprets.

B. The educational interpreter should report directly to a classroom teacher or a designated supervisor when the interpreter finds it necessary to step out of the interpreter role. The educational interpreter may only step out of the interpreting role to report:

1) serious behavior which any other school personnel would have to report (such as suspected child abuse, or the breaking of laws or school policies) or

2) significant academic problems which may require additional support services.

C. The educational interpreter may provide input for -- or may attend -- educational team meetings (including Individual Education Plan staffings) to answer questions and address concerns related to a student's communication abilities and needs. The educational interpreter may answer such questions such as the following:

1) Does the hearing-impaired student need interpreting services?

2) Does the hearing-impaired student attend to the educational interpreter?

3) How does the hearing-impaired student sign (American Sign Language, Pidgin Sign Language, Manually Coded English)?

4) How does the student communicate with the teacher, other school personnel, and his peers?

In these situations, the educational interpreter shall not discuss the student's progress or behavior in the classroom and shall direct questions on school performance to the appropriate school personnel (e.g., teacher, counselor, principal).

D. If the educational interpreter also works with a student as a tutor, this person may discuss the student's performance in the tutoring session only, but may not discuss the student's performance in a situation in which this person is functioning as an educational interpreter.

E. The educational interpreter shall either interpret or participate in I.E.P. meetings, but shall not do both.

2. Interpreters/Transliterators shall render the message faithfully, always conveying the content and spirit of the speaker, using language most readily understood by the person(s) whom they serve.

Guidelines for Educational Interpreters:

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A. It is recognized that some hearing-impaired students may not fully understand an interpreter message due to differences in culture, language, or experience. It is appropriate for educational interpreters to clarify bits of information which fit into this category (e.g., hearing-culture jokes, certain English vocabulary which does not translate well). However, this is to be done on a limited basis for the benefit of clear communication -- and should not be tutoring per se.

B. The educational interpreter is often asked to use a particular system of Manually Coded English. The interpreter shall consider his/her skills in this system before accepting an assignment.

C. If the educational interpreter disagrees with the school's policy, requiring the use of a particular system of Manually Coded English, the interpreter should discuss this with his/her immediate supervisor or request an I.E.P. conference.

3. Interpreters/Transliterators shall not counsel, advise, or interject personal opinions.

Guidelines for Educational Interpreters:

A. The interpreter shall maintain an impartial role. The interpreter is not responsible for disciplining hearing-impaired students. The student(s) should be allowed freedom to make choices and to learn as independently as possible.

B. For students who are not fully aware of the interpreter's role, the educational interpreter may briefly step out of the interpreter role for the following purposes:

1) The interpreter may give clues needed for successful interaction. For example, when the student mistakenly directs questions to the interpreter, the interpreter may sign, "I will interpret for you, so you may ask the teacher" (or may use subtle body language or eye cues).

2) The interpreter may clarify his/her role in the classroom as situations arise.

C. If the educational interpreter also functions as a tutor, this person may be involved in clarification, review, and reinforcement of concepts presented by a classroom teacher. The interpreter's role during the tutoring session is, therefore, separate and distinct from his/her role during an interpreting situation.

4. Interpreters/Transliterators shall accept assignments using discretion with regard to skill, setting, and the consumers involved.

Guidelines for Educational Interpreters:

A. An educational interpreter should consider the following information about an assignment to determine if his/her skills are adequate for the assignment:

1) the age levels of the students,

2) the content of the various classes (e.g., academic, vocational),

3) special interpreting situations (e.g., assembly programs, field trips, films),

4) the student's English skills, and

5) the student's sign language preference (American Sign Language, Pidgin Sign Language, Manually Coded English).

B. The interpreter should also consider his/her flexibility within the sign language continuum in meeting the needs of the hearing-impaired consumers. Also, the interpreter should consider his/ her competency in the English language as well as in American Sign Language.

5. Interpreters/Transliterators shall request compensation for services in a professional and judicious manner.

Guidelines for Educational Interpreters:

A. It is recommended that educational interpreters be paid according to a salary schedule which includes the following factors:

1) completion of an interpreter training program; degree in interpretation;

2) years of interpreting experience (especially in the educational setting);

3) college courses in education; degree in education;

4) Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) certification; and

5) number of CEU's related to interpreting skills, sign language, deafness, and education.

B. It is recommended that educational interpreters be guaranteed a set number of hours per week and, as a paraprofessional, consultant, or professional, receive the same benefits as other staff members.

C. It is recommended that educational interpreters have a separate category from other staff members, so that their unique skills and expertise are rightfully recognized. Educational interpreters should be classified as paraprofessional or professional depending on this person's role and responsibilities. The following job titles are examples that would be appropriate: educational interpreter, communication facilitator, interpreter/ tutor, interpreter/tutor/notetaker, and interpreter/ aide.

6. Interpreters/Transliterators shall function in a manner appropriate to the situation.

Guidelines for Educational Interpreters:

A. The educational interpreter represents an attitude toward deafness and the hearing-impaired students in the mainstream situation, and interpreters must recognize their importance as role models.

B. When the educational interpreter has other duties as well (such as being a tutor or teacher's aide), a clear distinction needs to be made as to which role the person is functioning in at any given time. One suggestion is the wearing of a special smock or jacket to be worn during interpreting, to help clarify and distinguish roles. Another suggestion is that a separate time be established when the student is scheduled for tutoring services from the interpreter.

7. Interpreters/Transliterators shall strive to further knowledge and skills through participation in workshops, professional meetings, interaction with professional colleagues and reading of current literature in the field.

Interpreters/Transliterators, by virtue of membership in or certification by RID Inc., shall strive to maintain high professional standards in compliance with the Code of Ethics

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EIPA; Williams & Schick

The following descriptions are profiles of what an interpreter may or may not be able to do when evaluated at each specific level. These profiles are summative and should not reflect the individual's specific areas of strengths or weaknesses. Please refer to the detailed analysis provided with this evaluation for more specific information.

1 = Beginner

Demonstrates a very limited sign vocabulary with frequent errors in production At times, production may be incomprehensible. Grammatical structure tends to be nonexistent. Individual is only able to interpret very simple voice to sign communication and has great difficulty interpreting sign to voice. Sign production lacks prosody and use of space is minimal. An individual at this level is not recommended for classroom interpreting.

2 = Advanced Beginner

Demonstrates only a basic vocabulary. Vocabulary limitations interfere with successful communication. More fluent than a Beginner but lack of fluency still greatly interferes with the ability to communicate. Grammatically, frequent errors or non-grammatical constructions are apparent. Individual able to read signs at the word level but complete sentences often require repetitions and repairs. Some use of prosody and space, but use is inconsistent and often incorrect. both voice to sign and sign to voice interpreting demonstrates serious deficiencies in the message conveyed.

3 = Intermediate

Demonstrates knowledge of basic vocabulary, but vocabulary would most likely be insufficient for complex topics. Individual is able to sign in a fairly fluent nature with appropriate prosody, but pacing is still slow with infrequent pauses to search for vocabulary. Sign production may be incorrect but may not interfere with communication. Grammatical production may still be incorrect and interfere with communication. Complex grammatical productions should most likely pose a great a problem. May comprehend a signed message but may need repetition and assistance at times. Both voice to sign and sign to voice interpretations may contain all of key points, but parts of the message may not be interpreted. Use of prosody is acceptable, but not all prosodic information is present in signed or spoken interpretation. An individual at this level would be able to interpret basic classroom content, but should demonstrate great difficulty conveying all information in the message and may have difficulty with interpreting complex information.

4 = Advanced Intermediate

Demonstrates broad use of vocabulary with sign production generally correct. Individual demonstrates strategies for conveying information when a specific sign is not in their vocabulary. Grammatical constructions are generally clear and consistent but complex information may still pose problems. Prosody is good, with appropriate facial expression. Uses space consistently. Fluency may deteriorate when rate or complexity of input increases. Comprehension of most signed messages at a normal rate is good and sign to voice message conveyed all keys points. An individual at this level would be able tao interpret most classroom content but may have difficulty clearly or accurately conveying information in some situations.

5 = Advanced

Demonstrates a broad and fluent use of vocabulary, with variety of strategies for communicating new vocabulary. Sign prosody is appropriate for most situations. sign production is usually correct. Individual demonstrates full use of grammar and incorporates space is signing correctly. Complex constructions are not a problem. Comprehension or signed messages is very good. An individual at this level is capable of clearly and accurately conveying the vast majority of interactions within the classroom.

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At its meeting on May 9, 1997, the State Board of Education adopted a motion to direct the Commissioner of Education to provide a plan for the education of deaf and hard of hearing children that includes the following components. This plan is to be presented for public comment on June 4, 1997, at 7:00 p.m., and submitted for Board action on June 5, 1997. The components of the plan, as directed by the Board, are:

1. Detailed specifications for educational programs and services to be provided within the framework outlined in Draft #1;

2. Transition plan for implementing the action;

3. Timelines for the recommended plan and transition and a listing of necessary financial resources;

4. Choices for parents from among an array of quality options;

5. Educational programs that include integrated and self-contained options;

6. Residential services; and

7. A statement of the intent of the Board to vacate the current campus no later than August 31, 1998.

Note: On 6/5/97 the State Board of Education approved the following as a "promising practices" guideline which may be used for program development, improvement and evaluation purposes.

Schooling Standards

The educational program and support services for deaf students may provide:

- Appropriate screening and assessment of hearing and vision capabilities and communication and language needs beginning at the earliest possible age and continuing throughout their educational experience
- Family support as early as possible to enable parents to be fully informed and actively participate in developing intervention based on the IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan for birth-age three services) of the IEP (Individual Education Plan for above age three services)
- Early intervention to provide for acquisition of a solid language base at the earliest possible age
- Access to learning opportunities to achieve the goals expected of all students
- Individualized, free and appropriate education across a fully depicted spectrum of educational program options
- Comprehensive and appropriate support services
- Opportunities to develop highest level of skill possible in communication and social interaction
- Settings where peers, teachers, and other adults are able to communicate with the child in the child's preferred mode of communication
- Appropriately trained and qualified professional staff, paraeducators, interpreters, mentors and resource personnel
- Successful adult role models who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Interaction with peers who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Cooperation among state agencies and other service providers facilitated by program managers or case managers who could broker the needed services

- Educational placement in settings most conducive to the child's individual needs prior to placement, and the annual Individual Education Program (IEP) team process should include identification and discussion of:

  - severity of hearing loss and potential for using residual hearing
  - academic skills and learning style
  - communication and linguistic needs
  - preferred modes of communication
  - linguistic, cultural, social and emotional needs
  - opportunities for peer interaction
  - placement preferences
  - student motivation
  - family support